

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5291
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LUSAKA 0822

EXDIS

CAPETOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR ZA RH
SUBJ: KAUNDA CONVERSATION WITH HARRY OPPENHEIMER

REF: LUSAKA 0756

SUMMARY: IN A LENGTHY CONVERSATION WITH HARRY
OPPENHEIMER, PRES. KAUNDA ASKED THE ANGLO AMERICAN
PRESIDENT TO OPERATE THREE NEW PROJECTS IN ZAMBIA.
ON RHODESIA HE REQUESTED OPPENHEIMER TO OBTAIN ASSURANCES
FROM SMITH THAT HE STILL SUPPORTED MAJORITY RULE AND WOULD
AGREE TO RETURN TO GENEVA. OPPENHEIMER OBTAINED THESE ASSURANCES
WHICH SMITH PROMISED TO MAKE IN A PUBLIC STATEMENT AT THE
RHODESIA FRONT CONGRESS APRIL 18. OPENHEIMER ALSO REPORTED TO
KAUNDA THAT NKOMO'S POSITION IN RHODESIA HAD WEAKENED SHARPLY
AS A RESULT OF HIS ALLIANCE WITH MUGABE. END SUMMARY.

1. WITH CUBAN FLAGS AND CASTRO'S PICTURE ON THE STREET, ALL
LUSAKA TALKING ABOUT THE ARRIVAL OF CASTRO AND PODGORNY AND
ZAMBIA'S MOVE LEFT, PRES. KAUNDA QUIETLY RECEIVED HARRY OPPEN-
HEIMER, SOUTH AFRICAN PRESIDENT OF THE MULTINATIONAL ANGLO-
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AMERICAN ON TUESDAY, MARCH 22, FOR OVER FIVE HOURS. AMONG
THOSE PRESENT DURING THE CONVERSATION WERE HUMPHREY MULEMBA,
CHAIRMAN OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE, SUB-COMMITTEE ON ECONOMICS;
DOMINIC MULAISHO, RECENTLY APPOINTED SPECIAL ECONOMIC ADVISER
TO THE PRESIDENT; AND MARK CHONA, SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE
PRESIDENT ON INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS. OPPENHEIMER HAD HIS LOCAL
PRESIDENT, VERNON WEBBER, WITH HIM.

2. THE FIRST SUBJECT WHICH PRES. KAUNDA RAISED WAS ECONOMICS. HE TALKED ABOUT THE FAILURE OF HIS PARASTATALS TO OPERATE EFFICIENTLY AND INVITED ANGLO-AMERICAN WHICH ALREADY PLAYS A LARGE ROLE IN ZAMBIA TO OPERATE THREE MORE ENTERPRISES: EMERALD MINING, OIL RECYCLING AND ANIMAL FEED MANUFACTURE. ANGLO HAS ALREADY BEEN WORKING ON THE OIL RECYCLING PROJECT PUTTING TOGETHER THE FINANCING FOR A PLANT WHICH WILL FEED THE LUBE BLENDING PLANT WHICH MOBIL IS TO BUILD AND OPERATE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE GRZ. ANGLO ACCEPTED THE PRESIDENT'S OFFER AND WAS TOLD TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH HUMPHREY MULEMBA IN WORKING OUT THE DETAILS. PRES. KAUNDA UNDERLINED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MATTER BY COMMENTING THAT IF THESE PROJECTS AND OTHERS HE HAD IN MIND WERE NOT SUCCESSFUL, BOTH MULEMBA AND HIS BOSS (I.E., KAUNDA) WOULD LOSE THEIR JOBS.

2. THE CONVERSATION TURNED TO NAMIBIA. OPPENHEIMER DESCRIBED THE TURNHALLE CONFERENCE AND HIS ASSESSMENT OF WHAT WOULD FOLLOW FROM IT IN SOME DETAIL. EXPRESSING SURPRISE, KAUNDA ASKED WHETHER HIS UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT OPPENHEIMER SAID WAS CORRECT THAT THE ARRANGEMENT WOULD RESULT IN INDEPENDENCE WITHIN A FIXED PERIOD; ONE MAN, ONE VOTE, MAJORITY RULE FOLLOWING THAT; AND FREEDOM OF ANY GROUP OR PARTY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTION. HE DID NOT COMMENT FURTHER WHEN OPPENHEIMER ANSWERED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE TO EACH OF THESE QUESTIONS.

3. MOST OF THE CONVERSATION REVOLVED AROUND THE RHODESIAN SITUATION. OPPENHEIMER EXPLAINED TO THE PRESIDENT THAT THE LAST CONFIDENTIAL

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TIME THEY HAD TALKED KAUNDA HAD DEPRECATED OPPENHEIMER'S JUDGMENTS BECAUSE THEY WERE NOT THOSE OF A BLACK AFRICAN. THIS TIME OPPENHEIMER SAID HE HAD DONE HIS WORK CAREFULLY AND GATHERED TOGETHER THE VIEWS OF AFRICANS IN THE VARIOUS MINING AREAS OF RHODESIA AND TOWNS OVER THE TERRITORY WHERE ANGLO OPERATED. HE SAID HE COULD STATE WITH AUTHORITY THAT JOSHUA NKOMO'S POSITION HAD SUFFERED BADLY THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY AS A RESULT OF HIS ALLIANCE WITH MUGABE WHICH WAS HIGHLY UNPOPULAR. RECOGNITION OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT BY THE FRONTLINE HAD DONE FURTHER DAMAGE TO NKOMO'S POSITION. KAUNDA LOOKED SURPRISED AND SKEPTICAL. THEY BOTH AGREED THE SITUATION WAS GETTING EXTREMELY SERIOUS AND THAT TOO MANY LIVES WERE BEING LOST. NEW STEPS WERE NECESSARY. KAUNDA ASKED OPPENHEIMER TO BOTAIN FROM SMITH A NEW STATEMENT REAFFIRMING HIS SUPPORT FOR MAJORITY RULE IN RHODESIA WITHIN A SPECIFIED PERIOD OF LESS THAN TWO YEARS AND AN AGREEMENT TO RETURN TO THE NEGOTIATIONS IN GENEVA. OPPENHEIMER SAID HE WAS CONVINCED HE COULD GET SUCH AN UNDERTAKING.

4. SUBSEQUENT TO THE CONVERSATION THE MATTER WAS DISCUSSED WITH RANKING MEMBERS OF THE RHODESIAN FRONT VISITING IN SOUTH AFRICA. THEY COMMUNICATED WITH SMITH AND OBTAINED A FIRM AGREEMENT TO MAKE THE STATEMENT REQUESTED BY KAUNDA. THEY SAID THAT SMITH HAD ALREADY DECIDED TO MAKE SUCH A STATEMENT AND HAD OBTAINED THE AGREEMENT OF THE PARTY CAUCUS EARLIER THIS MONTH. HE WOULD NOW ATTEMPT TO GET THE SAME APPROVAL FROM THE PARTY CONGRESS TO MEET APRIL 18. ON THAT OCCASION HE WOULD MAKE THE STATEMENT PUBLIC. THIS INFORMATION WAS PASSED BACK TO PRES. KAUNDA BEFORE THE END OF THE WEEK. THE RHODESIANS FURTHER SAID THAT SMITH HAD NOW ABANDONED HIS EFFORTS TOWARDS AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT AND A REFERENDUM. HE WAS WORKING FOR A RETURN TO GENEVA AND WOULD COOPERATE IN ARRANGING THE DETAILS (NOT ON THE BASIS OF THE KISSINGER FIVE POINTS). HE WOULD NOT OBJECT TO THE PRESENCE OF MUGABE AND NKOMO.

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5. THE CONVERSATION ON MARCH 22 TURNED TO THE SUBJECT OF ZAIRE. KAUNDA EXPRESSED HIS SERIOUS CONCERN OVER DEVELOPMENTS THERE. HE SAID HE FELT HE WAS IN REAL DANGER OF BECOMING SURROUNDED

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LUSAKA 0822

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BY HOSTILE FORCES AND NOTED THE ADDED IMPORTANCE OF A RHODESIAN

SETTLEMENT AS A RESULT OF ZAIRE DEVELOPMENTS. KAUNDA SAID HE RECOGNIZED THE KATANGA GENDARMES CONSTITUTED AN EXTERNAL INVASION BY INTERNAL ELEMENTS. HE SAID HE BELIEVED THE INVADING KATANGANS CONTINUED TO BE FINANCED AND SUPPORTED BY UNION MINIERE. OPPENHEIMER EXPRESSED HIS SKEPTICISM OVER THIS.

6. THE LAST SUBJECT OF CONVERSATION WAS SOUTH AFRICA. KAUNDA SAID THAT IF RHODESIA AND NAMIBIA COULD BE RESOLVED HE WOULD RECOGNIZE THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN SITUATION WAS AN INTERNAL MATTER. THOUGH HE WOULD EXPRESS HIS DISAGREEMENT WITH SOUTH AFRICAN POLICY AND STRONGLY ADVISE MODIFICATION OF IT, HE WOULD ACCEPT THAT THIS WAS NOT SOMETHING IN WHICH AFRICA COULD PROPERLY INTERVENE.

7. SUBSEQUENT TO THE MEETING WITH OPPENHEIMER, ANGOLO'S PRESIDENT IN ZAMBIA, VERNON WEBBER, WAS SUMMONED TO STATE HOUSE FRIDAY EVENING MARCH 25 FOR A PRIVATE MEETING WITH JOSHUA NKOMO. NKOMO MADE MANY OF THE POINTS THAT HE HAS MADE TO US (REFTEL). HE PROTESTED STRONGLY THAT HE WAS NOT A COMMUNIST AND THAT HE WOULD PROVE IT WHEN HE TOOK HIS PLACE IN THE GOVERNMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE AND HE ASKED FOR HELP. WEBBER ASKED WHETHER PRES. KAUNDA HAD PASSED ON THE BURDEN OF HARRY OPPENHEIMER'S CONFIDENTIAL

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CONVERSATION AND WHEN NKOMO SAID NO, WEBBER REPEATED IT IN DETAIL. ACCORDING TO WEBBER, NKOMO WAS BADLY SHAKEN. HE OF COURSE DENIED THE TRUTH OF OPPENHEIMER'S JUDGMENT BUT WAS CLEARLY UPSET BY THE INFORMATION. HE SAID HE WOULD AGREE TO RETURN TO GENEVA AND THAT HE WOULD NOT OBJECT TO THE PRESENCE OF SITHOLE THOUGH HE STILL REFUSED TO ACCEPT THE BISHOP AT THE TABLZ AND HE ASKED TO REMAIN IN TOUCH WITH ANGLO.

8. COMMENT: IT IS HARD TO KNOW HOW MUCH WEIGHT TO PUT IN THIS REPORT WHICH WAS GIVEN TO ME BY VERNON WEBBER THE DAY FOLLOWING KAUNDA'S STATEMENT TO PODGORNÝ THAT "THE ROAD TO PEACE IS CLOSED". THE GRZ IS PREPARED TO FOLLOW A NUMBER OF ROUTES SIMULTANEOUSLY. WE ARE INCLINED NOT TO TAKE ANY ONE OF THEM AT FULL FACE VALUE, THE PUBLIC EVEN LESS THAN THE PRIVATE. IT IS OUR STRONG IMPRESSION THAT KAUNDA IS USING THE COVER OF THE CASTRO-PODGORNÝ VISITS TO TAKE STEPS HE HAD IN MIND AS FAR BACK AS JANUARY TO RELY MORE HEAVILY ON THE MARKET SYSTEM IN MANAGING ZAMBIA'S ECONOMY. THE MOST DIFFICULT AREA TO JUDGE IS OPPENHEIMER'S REPORT TO SMITH'S CHANGE OF HEART TO RETURN TO GENEVA INSTEAD OF PURSUING THE INTERNAL OPTION AND REFERENDUM. IT WAS NOT CLEAR TO ME WHETHER SMITH'S ABANDONMENT OF THE INTERNAL OPTION WAS EXPLICIT OR IMPLIED. CONCEIVABLY HE COULD CONTINUE TO PURSUE IT EVEN IF HE RETURNED TO GENEVA; BUT WITH DIFFICULTY. MONDAY'S NEWS REPORTS THE PUBLIC REJECTION BY SMITH OF MUZOREWA'S CALL FOR A REFERENDUM LENDING SOME CREDENCE TO THE REPORT.

9. SINCE JANUARY THE TWO PRINCIPAL OBSTACLES TO A RETURN TO GENEVA HAVE BEEN SMITH'S REJECTION OF THE RICHARD PROPOSALS AND THE HARDLINE POSITION TAKEN BY THE PATRIOTIC FRONT REFUSING PARTICIPATION BY MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE. THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE REMARKS ABOVE ARE THAT SMITH IS NOW PREPARED TO TAKE A NEW LOOK AT THE RICHARD PROPOSALS. I ASKED WEBBER THIS SPECIFICALLY. HE ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY BUT WITHOUT GREAT CONVICTION. IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT AT LEAST SMITH WOULD BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS A CONSTITUTION FOR AN INDEPENDENT RHODESIA AT GENEVA AS THE BRITISH
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AND NKOMO ARE NOW CONSIDERING. NKOMO'S OPPOSITION TO REPRESENTATION BY OTHER NATIONALISTS WILL BE A GREAT DEAL MORE DIFFICULT TO SUSTAIN IN VIEW OF THEIR GROWING STRENGTH AND HIS WEAKNESS. A NEW ELEMENT IN THE PICTURE IS THE ZAIRE SITUATION WHICH ADDS TO THE URGENCY OF A RHODESIA SOLUTION FROM ZAMBIA'S POINT OF VIEW. IF THIS REPORT IS ACCURATE, THE PROSPECTS FOR A RETURN TO GENEVA WOULD APPEAR TO HAVE BRIGHTENED. LOW

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